



## 2026 CISA OPEN RULES

St. Lawrence River - Lake Ontario  
Kingston, Ontario – August 31 – September 6

**All rules outlined in this document are to be considered in effect during both Official Practice and Competition Days and as otherwise stated.**

1. **Legal Age:** A minimum of one competitor must be 18 years of age or older on or before the date(s) of the event (including any official practice days). Competitors under the age of 18 must have written parental consent from both parents or guardian(s).
2. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** CISA has a strict Zero Tolerance for unsportsmanlike conduct. Infractions to this policy may result in automatic disqualification without a refund. Competitors are required to follow high levels of sportsmanship and professionalism, courtesy, and conservation. Anglers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, to CISA and Canada Bass, and to the sport of competitive fishing. Conduct not complying with these standards is subject to disqualification and includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Violation of, or failure to comply with, any of the CISA Open Rules or CISA Code of Conduct;
  - b. Suspension, disqualification, or ban from any tournament or fishing organization;
  - c. Any words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with CISA Open Rules, or which fail to comply with the standards set forth in the CISA Code of Conduct.
  - d. In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined above, CISA shall have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete by returning the entry fee (minus any deposit(s)), or to disqualify any competitor.
3. **Communication:** There shall be no advantageous third-party communication on or off the water during the event (including official practice) with anyone not competing in the CISA Open. There shall be no advantageous communication with CISA Open competitors on the water during the event (except between two partners in different boats during the practice period). Doing so may result in disqualification or further action(s).
  - a. Cell Phones are for emergency and safety use only. Competitors may be asked to show their phones (recent calls/texts/messages) at the request and discretion of tournament officials if requested.
4. **Tournament Boundaries:** All navigable waters of the St. Lawrence River from the dam at Cornwall to and including Lake Ontario (including Canada and the USA waters). Locking is not permitted.

5. **Laws and Regulations:** All Federal, Provincial and State fishing, boating, and criminal laws and regulations must be adhered to; noncompliance may result in disqualification without refund.
6. **Official Practice/Tournament Restrictions:**
  - a. There are no restrictions for CISA Open competitors on fishing tournament waters before or during the official practice period.
  - b. All competitors must be off the water by **sundown on Wednesday September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**. CISA reserves the right to change restricted waters and off-limit dates if necessary. In the case of restricted waters being modified, CISA will notify all competitors as soon as possible through the Canada Bass Facebook page or by other means of electronic communication.
  - c. During the three-day event, only valid CISA Open competitors, designated camera boats and designated boat staff may be on the water. Any other associated persons such as marshals that are not in boats, staff not designated for boat duties, volunteers, family members of competitors and eliminated anglers must stay off the tournament waters during the three-day event.
  - d. There will be no fishing during the event in or around the Confederation Basin, including the waters immediately outside the basin walls.
7. **Three Day Format:** All registered boats fish during the first two days of the competition. Only the Top 20 teams in the standings will qualify for the final day of competition on Day 3. The exact number of teams qualifying for Day 3 may vary based on total field size with an expected 20% of the field (1:5) qualifying for the final round.
8. **Practice/ Pre-Fishing Partners:** Competitors are not allowed to pre-fish with non-competitors during the official practice period (August 31 – September 2). For the 60-days prior to official practice of the 2026 CISA Open, it is not permitted to hire a guide or pre-fish with anglers (other than your registered CISA Open tournament partner or a drawn non-boater in another tournament) who have won a significant tournament on the 2026 CISA Open waters within the last 2-years; doing so will result in disqualification.
  - a. An exception for pre-fishing limitations above will be made for children of the angler under the age of 12 that will not be participating in any fishing competition on the tournament waters that calendar year.
9. **Artificial Lures Only:** No live or preserved bait (other than pork rind) allowed during official practice and competition days. Umbrella type rigs with multiple hooks are prohibited.
10. **Fish Species and Minimum Sizes:** Competitors are not allowed to have smallmouth or largemouth bass in their live well(s) during official practice. During the tournament, minimum size limit is 12-inches (30cm); all other species must be immediately released.
11. **Live well:** You must have an operating live well; competitors live wells are subject to inspection by CISA tournament official(s) at any time during official practice or competition day(s).
12. **Fish Limits:** An aggregate limit of 5 bass (largemouth or smallmouth). The penalty for retaining more than the event limit (5 bass) are as follows:
  - a. If a team is found to have more than 5 bass in their live well during competition; a Tournament Director (or appointed tournament official) will cull out the same number of fish that team was over the limit by starting with the biggest fish.
  - b. If a team is witnessed releasing a fish at any time other than actively culling (including at the end of the day before weigh-in) the boat's weight for the day will be ZERO if confirmed. The only

exception is the release of an unhealthy fish for its betterment that is part of your 5-fish limit.

- c. The culling of dead fish is strictly prohibited; if a fish dies in the live-well, it must be retained for weigh-in, and the fish's weight will count toward that team's daily weight (minus the 0.5lb per dead fish penalty).
  - d. Fish regurgitation cannot be presented as part of a team's catch.
13. **Moving under power:** Competitors are prohibited from running with more than the legal tournament 5-fish limit (this includes idling from one fishing spot to another or driving to the weigh-in site).
14. **Fish Care:** Fish care is a priority for our tournament and is required for the sustainable use of our precious resource. All competitors must follow and obey the rules in the **CISA Fish Care Plan (attached)**. The following rules also pertain to fish care and must be followed by all anglers.
- a. Culling: Only non-invasive "clip type" (i.e. non-piercing) culling systems may be used.
  - b. Real-Time Culling: Immediate culling is mandatory; No team is to retain more than a single tournament limit (5 fish) at any time. If a sixth fish (or seventh fish resulting from a double header) is brought into the boat, culling must occur immediately. All fishing by both team members must stop immediately (i.e. both lines reeled in). At least one fish must be released or until the maximum 5-fish limit is restored before fishing can resume by either team member. While culling, both angler's baits are expected to be brought in the boat (not left in the water). The penalty for violating this culling procedure is 2 lbs. subtracted from the team's weight for each infraction. (CISA encourages competitors to adopt and practice this culling procedure if not already doing so. It is in line with other top-tier tournament organizations including International Sportfishing Associations around the world).
15. **Dead Fish Penalty:** 0.50lb penalty per dead fish. A Fish will be determined alive or dead at the weigh-in site before the fish is weighed; decisions of tournament officials are final.
16. **Weigh-in and Release Procedure:** Detailed information on the exact process will be reviewed at the angler's meeting prior to the event. All boats are required to report to the "check-in" boat prior to weigh in. Details will be communicated at the angler's meeting. All anglers are required to follow the **CISA Fish Care Plan (attached)**.
17. **Release Site Confirmation:** Competitors will be responsible for carefully transporting and releasing their day's catch after their fish are weighed as described in the **CISA Fish Care Plan (attached)**.
18. **Early Weigh-in:** Tournament Scales will be open at 9:00am. Competitors choosing to weigh a fish (or more) prior to their official check-in time may choose to do so and are encouraged to call tournament officials prior to heading to the scales to avoid delays. Once weighed, the anglers may resume fishing with a new limit of 5 minus number of fish weighed in.
19. **Personal Flotation Device:** Competitors must wear an approved personal flotation device while the boat is under power by the combustion engine. Manual Suspenders/vests or manual inflatable life jackets will not be acceptable. Automatic Suspenders/vests or automatic inflatable life jackets are acceptable however they be subject to inspection for expiration at the time of check in. If you choose to wear an automatic Suspender/vest, automatic inflatable life jacket or a U.S. COAST GUARD approved life jacket, you must have an approved Department of Transport Canada life jacket within your vessel (if in question, Tournament Official's decision will stand).
20. **Kill Switch:** A Kill switch must be fixed to driver (*typically fixed to PDF being worn by driver*) while the boat is powered by combustion engine.

21. **Fishing License/ Boat Operator Card:** An Ontario Sportfishing Fishing License is required for all competitors fishing Canadian waters, no exceptions (the Conservation License is not acceptable). A New York fishing license is required for all competitors fishing USA waters. At least one competitor per team is required to possess a valid Pleasure Craft Operator Card as issued by Transport Canada or Boat Smart "boating safety certificate" issued by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators in the USA. Competitors may be asked to produce their valid fishing license(s) and/or boat license card at any time; please ensure they are with you during the tournament, including practice days. Anglers will not be permitted to compete until these credentials are produced if asked.
22. **Ministry Nets:** No fishing within 100 yards (91.44 m) of a Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry net.
23. **Fuel/Repairs:** If in need of fuel or repairs, one competitor must always remain with the boat; Receipt(s) must be retained and presented to tournament officials if requested.
24. **Minimum Fishing Distance:** Competitors must maintain a courteous and sportsmanlike distance from each other while on the water during the official practice days and competition days.
- Do not board or approach any another vessel during the event unless there is an emergency, or you require a tow or transfer (see rules 25 - 27).
25. **Break Downs/Towing:** If your boat is deemed no longer functional you may acquire a tow by another vessel (competitor or non-competitor). If the towing team feels for any reason that they cannot tow you as it may jeopardize their standings, you must respect their decision.
26. **Fish Transfer:** If towing is not an option, Fish can be transferred to another competitor's boat only (fish cannot be transferred to a non-competitor's vessel). One of the downed team members must ride with the assisting team and always stay with their fish.
- If you choose to transfer your fish into a competitor's live well; the live well must be separate (single live wells are acceptable if a fixed divider is in place) or you must use an approved fish friendly perforated sack complete with drawstring ensuring your fish cannot be combined with the rescuing team's fish.
  - Tagging systems of any kind are not an acceptable means of identification in this situation. If fish are combined accidentally (or otherwise), neither team's weight be accepted, and both teams will "zero" for that day of competition.
  - No fishing is allowed while the rescued competitor is in the boat and you must proceed directly to the weigh-in site where fish can be weighed or if applicable, transferred to a check-in boat if available and equipped to do so.
  - Once your fish have been transferred, the downed boat must be brought back directly to the tournament site for inspection. If, after inspection the boat is found tampered with then disqualification may result, and the rescuing team questioned. If in payout position, prizes will be held until boats are inspected.
  - The assisting team is responsible for making sure the rescued angler(s) is wearing an approved PFD, failure to do so will result in disqualification.
  - It is the responsibility of the team under duress to contact a tournament official prior to transferring fish.
27. **Tournament Official Assistance:** If a broken-down team acquires a tow by one of the event officials, the competitors must release their fish. A tow by tournament officials is not guaranteed and will depend on

factors such as availability, weather and distance. Using these factors, the Tournament Director will make decisions on an individual basis.

28. **Changing Boats:** If a broken-down boat returns to the tournament site and the team manages to repair their vessel or is changing boats, prior to transferring fish, the boat must be re-checked by Tournament Officials.
29. **Boat Inspection:** All boats must be inspected by tournament officials before moving out to the staging area for blast off. A tag will be given to the boat captain upon successful boat check.
30. **Check In and Late Penalty:** All Teams (unless already weighed in) must report to the designated Check-in Boat (or designated location) each competition day before their corresponding heat position time. A late penalty of 1 lb. per minute will be applied for any team failing to check-in on time. The tag received at morning boat check must be handed to the tournament officials before starting the weigh-in procedure. Failure to turn in that tag may result in a zero weight for the day. Confirm with tournament Officials that you have been "checked-in" and wait for instructions before proceeding to the weigh scales. No fishing can be conducted once you have checked in.
31. **Blast off:** The trickle start official blast-off time for flight #1 is scheduled for 7:00am or at safe light (determined by tournament officials) and daily check-in return times begin with the first flight at 3:00pm. Flight numbers and check-in time details will be discussed at angler's meeting prior to the event; notification will be given prior to the start of each competition day if any changes are required (e.g. fog delay).
32. **Weather:** If in case of extreme weather conditions, state of emergency or pandemic, the event may be delayed, rescheduled, restricted, shortened or canceled.
33. **Boat/Motor Size Restrictions:** Boats must be 17' or greater with a minimum 50HP engine. The horsepower of allowable outboard engines must not exceed the manufacture rating for your vessel. Kicker-motors are permitted. All outboard motors must be equipped with a working kill switch and attached to the boat operator while the vessel is under power of the main outboard engine.
34. **Insurance:** All boats must carry a minimum of \$1,000,000 insurance liability. Proof of insurance must be made available to tournament officials upon request.
35. **Temperature Rule:**
  - a. On days when air temperatures exceed 30 degrees Celsius, organizers may reduce the catch limits to 4 fish.
  - b. All rules which pertain to a 5-fish limit will automatically be amended to reflect the imposed 4-fish limit on a heat day.
36. **Protest:** Any protest regarding violations must be made in writing (paper, text etc.) to the Tournament Director upon receipt of the day's weigh slip while exiting the stage; or up to 30-minutes after sunset on official practice days. Protest cost is \$100 (*returned if Protest is upheld*). The decision of tournament officials is final and can not be challenged at any time.
37. **Infractions:** It is mandatory to report any rule violations to the Tournament Director, failing to do so is considered an infraction and may lead to disqualification.
38. **Disqualification:** In the event of a disqualification the competitor may be fined or required to compensate to maintain eligibility to fish in other CISA sanctioned events. No refunds if disqualified.
39. **Rules & Regs:** CISA reserves the right to amend the rules and regulations as it sees fit.

40. **Right to Refuse:** CISA reserves the right to refuse or deny a confirmed application(s) at any time. Entry fees may be returned if applicable (less non-refundable deposits as they may apply).
41. **Tournament Official's Ruling:** Tournament Official rulings are final. All rules and regulations apply to all CISA Open competitors. The interpretation of rules, determination of penalties, and decisions of CISA Open tournament officials are final. Competitors are encouraged to contact CISA for any rule(s) clarification prior to this or any subsequent CISA event.